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17 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Knoche

SUBJECT: Center for Intelligence Seminar on
S and T Analysis

25X1 1. The booklet attached summarizes subject seminar; John Hicks' memo to DDS&T, also attached, discusses a specific issue emerging from the seminar: the need for a mechanism for evaluating S and T analysis. Both were forwarded to you by [] at Hicks' request.

2. I suggest you might want to solicit comments from DDS&T (who has this package) as to whether the issue is worth raising before the new EAG. It looks a little abstruse for you to get into on an individual basis.

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Attachments

Distribution:

Orig - Mr. Knoche, w/atts.

1 - ER

1 - FR Chrono

FR:tsy (17 Jun 76)

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E2 IMPDET

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HPIC/D-196-76

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology
FROM : Director, National Photographic Interpretation Center
SUBJECT : Seminar Report - Center for the Study of Intelligence

25X1 1. I recommend that you read the summary issued on 25 May 1976 by the Center for the Study of Intelligence on the "Fifth Seminar on Intelligence Analysis: Scientific and Technical Analysis." It contains a goodly number of productive thoughts. One part in particular intrigued me and it is the subject of my following comments.

25X1 2. [] a panelist at this Seminar suggests that S&T intelligence analysis needs a formal mechanism for criticism. He suggests that just as novelists, composers, and artists are judged by hired critics, some subjective, critical standards could also be applied to S&T analysis. He also suggests that we could empanel some "old curmudgeons" who would offer unsubstantiated, subjective judgments on the quality of analysis.

3. I did not attend the Seminar -- I read the summary of its proceedings. My reaction, like that of the Seminar participants, is that [] suggestions merit further consideration.

25X1 4. We previously have experienced three different kinds of such mechanisms for criticism of analytical intelligence work. The Board of National Estimates, advisory panels of eminent experts from outside the intelligence apparatus, and the Product Review Division of the Intelligence Community Staff, have in their various ways provided critical feedback. None of them have satisfied the need that [] identifies. Those kinds of mechanisms had additional purposes or interests to serve, were adversary efforts, were arenas for compromise, or were simply self-serving. 25X1

5. What is the need? I believe that the need is primarily a personal need of individual analysts and of individual supervisors of analysts for objective feedback from respected persons whose sole

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interest is the quality of our analysis and its presentation. It is a need which sometimes is but usually is not satisfied in the process of analyst-supervisor relationships on a given analysis and production effort. The essence of the need in our context exists in the attitude of the recipient toward the giver of critical comment. Put another way, why is the critical comment being given and what will happen as a result -- in the perceptions of the recipient?

6. Thinking along that line, the most fruitful feedback conditions would be those in which the giver communicates privately to the recipient and the recipient decides if changes in his analytical method and presentation should be made. Implicitly, the recipient also could, at his initiative, discuss the criticism with the giver, and could share the criticism with others in his component including his supervisor.

7. I think that an independent feedback mechanism based on those conditions would be well worth trying, not only for S&T intelligence analysis and presentation but also for the work of our other intelligence production components. If we assign some resources to establish such a feedback capability, how could we then value the contribution that it makes? I suggest that this could be done simply and meaningfully by querying the recipients of the criticisms.

8. I do not believe that a formal evaluation system involving gradings or other quantifications, or one involving any of the standing bureaucratic committees would be productive.

9. What could be developed into a productive technique would be a small group of experienced intelligence officers, working full-time, who would be selective in choosing the on-going efforts which they would critique. They would relate directly to the responsible analyst or the responsible supervisor in a way which would not interfere with the analytical and production schedule for the effort being critiqued -- except that the responsible analyst or supervisor might himself choose to make a change as a result of an input from the critique group.

10. Such a critique group should be free (be given carte blanche) to critique any facet of an analytical production effort -- problem formulation, methodology, usefulness, presentation, and so on. The critique

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group should only make its effort, however, for the purpose of being helpful to the analyst in producing a piece of work which responds well in terms of its quality to the responsibilities and purposes of the Agency to serve the needs of the customer.

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JOHN J. HICKS

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SEMINAR REPORT



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